

Serial No.

REMARKS

Entry of the amendments to the specification, claims and abstract before examination of the application is respectfully requested.

If there are any questions regarding this Preliminary Amendment or this application in general, a telephone call to the undersigned would be appreciated since this should expedite the prosecution of the application for all concerned.

It is respectfully requested that, if necessary to effect a timely response, this paper be considered as a Petition for an Extension of Time sufficient to effect a timely response and shortages in other fees, be charged, or any overpayment in fees be credited, to the Account of Crowell & Moring, L.L.P., Deposit Account No. 05-1323 (Docket #2202/50165).

Respectfully submitted,

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JDS:pct

VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

Please amend claims 3, 6 and 7 as follows:

3. (Amended) A protection method according to [either] claim 1 [or claim 2], characterized in that each routine operating on said data implements said verification operation (400).

6. (Amended) A protection device according to [either] claim 4 [or claim 5], characterized in that each routine operating on said data implements said verification system (104, 105, 106).

7. (Amended) A franking machine (1), characterized in that it includes a device according to [any of claims 4 to 6] claim 4.